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# GUESTFA

 The Niagara Escarpment Magazine

1993





## Minister's Greetings

It gives me great pleasure to bring greetings to Cuesta readers as minister responsible for the Niagara Escarpment Program.

I appreciate having this opportunity to thank our friend and my predecessor, the Honourable Ruth Grier.

Mrs. Grier set high standards for the escarpment program which I resolve to continue and expand upon.

Ontario's Niagara Escarpment is a source of local pride and international acclaim. I refer, of course, to the escarpment's status as a United Nations World Biosphere Reserve.

This designation rightly draws attention to the escarpment's precious natural environment. Equally, it recognizes the value of our approach to protection through the Niagara Escarpment Plan and the

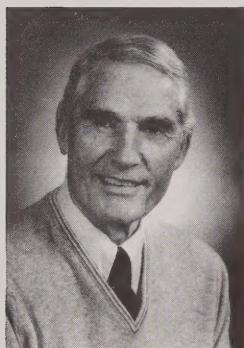
Niagara Escarpment Commission.

Later this year I will turn my attention to the Niagara Escarpment Plan Review. Fundamentally, the Plan works well. It is a remarkable achievement in environmental land-use planning. The review therefore concentrates on aspects of the Plan that caused concerns during its first five years of implementation.

I look forward to thoroughly considering the results of the review and reporting to you.

Until then, best wishes and thank you for your interest in Ontario's Niagara Escarpment.

C.J. (Bud) Wildman, Minister of Environment and Energy



## Chairman's Message

I usually use this space to discuss Escarpment protection directly. Lately, though, everyone asks me what we are doing to publicize the Escarpment. So here are highlights from our communications activities this year.

A new brochure highlighting the Escarpment parks system was published. The Escarpment is its own best promotion if we can get people to visit its parks and hike the Bruce Trail.

I am meeting with provincial MPP's and municipal leaders and councillors from Escarpment counties, regions and municipalities.

We coordinated the Canadian Biosphere Reserve exhibit at the 1992 Eco-Ed Conference in Toronto. This was the education component of the Rio environmental conference earlier in '92.

We also sponsored and staffed Escarpment displays in a number of communities.

We spent less than seven percent of our budget on education and public information. We get good value for the money.

A supportive public is our main strength. For example, there was a steady flow of positive letters to us and to the Minister of the Environment in 1992.

This was unfortunately motivated by increased activity by development interests. It showed, however, that large numbers of people are passionately committed to protecting Ontario's Niagara Escarpment.

Thank you. Your support encourages us to work harder.

But I want to be sure. Are we getting through? What else should we be doing? Write me with your suggestions. I will respond.

G.H.U. (Terk) Bayly Chairman

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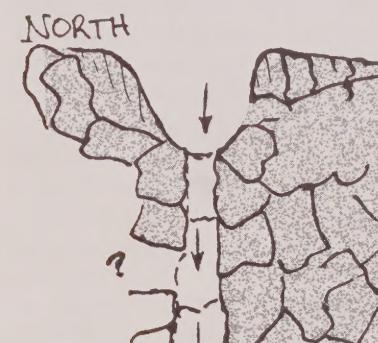


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A Gothic castle once overlooked the rolling hills of Caledon.

♻ This paper stock contains 10% post-consumer waste & 50% pre-consumer waste



Front Cover: Polypody ferns • Photo: Robert McCaw

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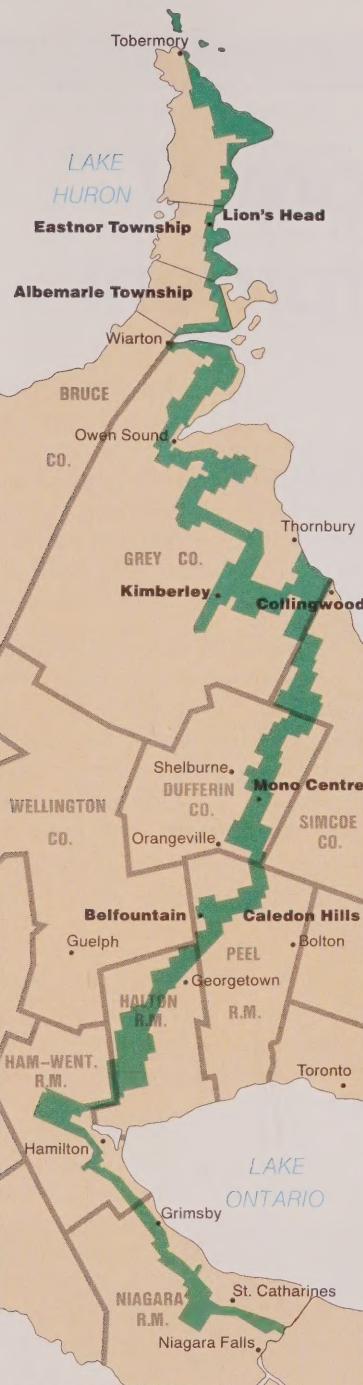
Niagara Escarpment Commission  
232 Guelph Street  
Georgetown, Ontario L7G 4B1  
(416) 877-5191



Ontario



Cette publication est également disponible en français.



**CUESTA** Originally a Spanish term meaning flank or slope of a hill, in geological terms means a ridge composed of gently dipping rock strata with a long gradual slope on one side, and a relatively steep scarp on the other

.....Niagara Escarpment Plan Area



# Take Care of the Escarpment

By  
Robert Bateman

The Niagara Escarpment has been an important part of my life. In fact, I planned my entire life around it. When I returned from my "Around the World by Land Rover Trip" in 1958, I looked for a teaching job in Halton County. I wanted to enjoy the benefits and natural beauty of the Escarpment.

Through a fluke of geology and history the Escarpment is the nearest 'rough country'. Its streams, cliffs, waterfalls and forests are near the most densely populated part of Canada. With intensive development sweeping across southern Ontario, anyone could see that this priceless legacy needs protection.

I saw the awesome wonders and gentle rural charm of the Escarpment during the first Bruce Trail hike, before there was a trail, in April of 1962. The Bruce Trail was a miracle of volunteer efforts and goodwill. It transformed the map of southern Ontario. It brings pleasure, serenity and well-being to hundreds of thousands of people.

One of the reasons the Niagara Escarpment Commission was formed was to recognize and help the fledgling trail. I was an original commission member,

possibly appointed as the token naturalist.

In my idealism I naturally expected that everyone would be in favour of preserving and protecting this precious heritage. I got a rude awakening. Most of the forces in charge of the Escarpment, including many local politicians, looked upon it as a commodity for sale to the highest bidder.

It was an onward and upward yellow brick road mindset left over from the 50's and 60's. 'You can't stop progress' was the operative belief. The feeling was that the post war boom would last forever. Today it is clear that this delusion was very destructive to our natural heritage and our human heritage for future generations.

I served on the Commission for 10 years. During this time my position was straightforward. We had to get our generation and future generations to appreciate that they were in a distinct, special part of Ontario. Human activity and development on the land would have to be just as special. It would have to be sensitive to natural features, not simply a carbon copy of the instant pudding suburbia found

elsewhere.

Recently our family lived for a year in southern Germany. We were struck by the wonderful landscape that had hardly changed in outward appearance since the days of Mozart. Yet they were up to date with modern farm machinery, fax machines and computers in villages. Looking around, the word that kept coming to mind was respect — respect for traditions and respect for future generations. There was and is a determination to preserve and protect the elegant essence of the countryside.

The Niagara Escarpment Commission, in spite of attempts to weaken and undermine it, has managed to hold on to some of the natural grace of the Escarpment.

It is an irreplaceable piece of Canada. Let us hope that we have the will and the power to continue and strengthen this effort to protect the elegant essence of our escarpment area.

Robert Bateman

### System will monitor environmental health

A new long-range monitoring system being designed by the Ministry of the Environment and Energy (MOEE) will provide a constant check on the environmental health of Ontario's Niagara Escarpment and the communities it passes through.

The monitoring system will measure such things as water quality and quantity, forest cover and the effects of human activity on plant and animal habitats. It will also look at the maintenance of Escarpment cultural and historical features.

Data collected will shape efforts to protect the escarpment through the Niagara Escarpment Plan and could lead to policy changes in the plan.

MOEE formed a "Stakeholders Advisory Committee" early in 1993 to help guide the creation of the system. Included are representatives for the environment, development, farming, aggregate mining, recreation and tourism, conservation authorities and municipalities.

Among other tasks, the committee will identify monitoring techniques and will set objectives

and boundaries for escarpment ecosystems to be monitored. They will also comment on the design of wider public outreach activities such as workshops and public open houses. ☐

### Escarpe ment Act marks 20th Anniversary

1993 marks the 20th anniversary of the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act.

The landmark legislation established the Niagara Escarpment Commission and laid out a process to create the Niagara Escarpment Plan.

The plan is Canada's first large scale environmental land-use plan. It was adopted in 1985 with unanimous approval from Ontario's three political parties.

The escarpment's unique ecology and Ontario's approach to planning in the area are internationally recognized. The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) named the escarpment a World Biosphere Reserve in 1990. ☐

### Take a fresh look at the Escarpment

Two new products released by the Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC) promote escarpment parks and the Niagara Escarpment Plan.

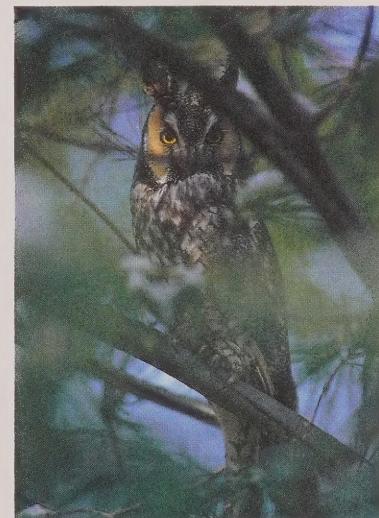
The NEC has published a magazine-size brochure featuring the escarpment's more than 100 parks. The "Niagara Escarpment Explorer" pamphlet includes many brand new pictures of flora and fauna by nature photographers Richard Armstrong, Neil Hester and Robert McCaw.

Want to explore for yourself? A large map makes finding the parks a breeze.

"Tomorrow's Land" is the NEC's first video in five years. The 14-minute production deals with development control on the escarpment from the viewpoint of landowners, science, municipal planning, education and the law.

Both products are available from the Niagara Escarpment Commission, 232 Guelph Street, Georgetown, Ontario, L7G 4B1, Phone: (416) 877-5191. The brochure is free, the video is \$6 but can be borrowed for free. ☐

*Below right: Long-eared Owl. Photo: Robert McCaw Below left: Escarpment south of Beamsville. Photo: John Koegler*



# Farming the Rugged Flat



**Story By Lorraine Brown**

**Photos By Victor Last**

"Ground rocky, timber scrubby." These words appeared frequently in the notes of the provincial surveyors who pushed their way through the Bruce Peninsula wilderness in 1855-56.

Nonetheless, the settlers began arriving a decade later: British and Europeans with dreams of establishing rich and prosperous farms in the townships of Lindsay, St. Edmund's, Eastnor, Amabel and Albemarle.

But after the forests had been logged off, the thin, rock-strewn soils of the Bruce Peninsula were revealed. Farming simply was not viable in much of the Bruce. Gradually the settlers moved west

*"The first of a series of drainage schemes began in 1884 with the deepening of Judges Creek."*

to greener pastures.

But the situation was different in Eastnor Township. In 1901, the Bruce County Valuators reported that one-third of Eastnor had potential to be first class agricultural land. And they were right. The Eastnor Plain near Lion's Head, known locally as the Ferndale Flats, is today the most productive agricultural land on the Bruce.

11,000 years ago, as the last glaciers receded from southern Ontario, a shallow lake covered the Eastnor Plain. Silts were deposited over centuries, and when the lake dried up, it left behind 6,000 acres of fertile clay loam soils. Settlers whose land grants were on the Eastnor Plain had the luck of the draw.

But the farmland was far from perfect. The impervious clay soil and flat, low-lying topography made for poor drainage, and many of the first crops drowned in the chilly wet soil. The first of a series

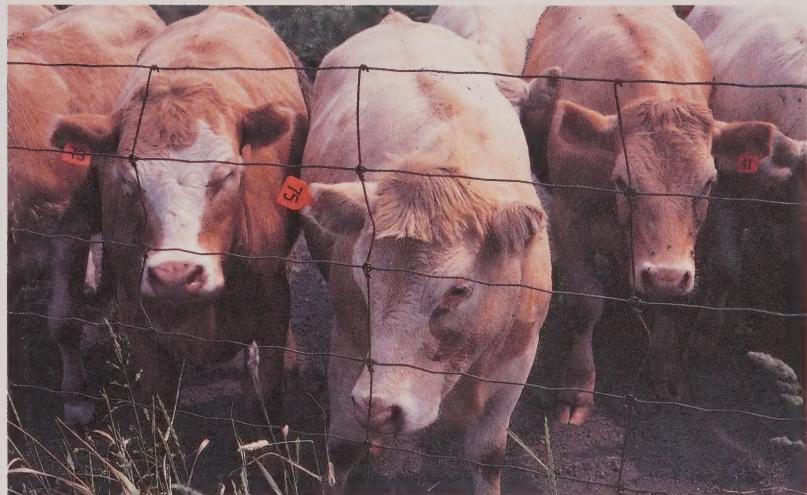
*Above: Lion's Head north of Isthmus Bay with escarpment in background.*

of drainage schemes began in 1884 with the deepening of Judges Creek. Drainage projects continue to this day.

Eastnor's extensive swamps also had agricultural potential. Once drained, the swamps were set on fire to eliminate trees and vegetation. Though hundreds of acres of rich, organic peat went up in smoke, the resulting soil of ash and peat muck would grow cereal crops.

Drained and cleared, the Eastnor Plain was soon producing oats, barley, peas, fall wheat and hay and pasture crops. For half a century, farmers thrived on Ferndale Flats. They bought up deforested land for 50 cents an acre in the 1930's, and turned it into ranchlands. Given the coolness of the Bruce Peninsula, and its heavy, wet soils, pasture soon proved to be the best way to use the land.

Livestock eventually became the backbone of the industry, with farmers importing exotic breeds of cattle such as Charolais from France and Highland cattle and Galloway from Scotland.



*Above: Charolais cattle, Mar, Bruce County. Below left: Clay plain drainage ditches. Below right: Drainage on the Eastnor Plain, Ferndale.*

*"In 1961, Eastnor's census listed 154 farms. By 1986, there were only 69."*

At the end of World War II, most farms were occupied. The Depression was over, and markets were good. Then in 1951, the bottom fell out of the cattle market. Prices plunged from 35 cents to 16 cents a pound. Gradually the farms were abandoned. In 1961, Eastnor's census listed 154 farms. By 1986,



there were only 69. The more successful farmers bought out their neighbours, putting more cattle on more pasture to achieve economies of scale. Today, single farms of 1,000 acres are not unusual in Eastnor Township.

Many of those farms are run by third and fourth generation descendants of the first settlers who arrived 125 years ago. Their names Stewart, Bridge, Warder, Mielhausen, Cunningham, Hellyer, McLay, Forbes, Rodgers and Bray are symbols of continuity in a fast-changing world. But

many find it necessary to take off-farm jobs to get by. "Over the last ten years the number of part-time farmers has really increased," said Eastnor/Lindsay farmer Milt McIver, who also works in municipal politics. "People with large land holdings are managing, but smaller operations are struggling."

Maitland Warder, whose grandfather was one of the peninsula's first English settlers and whose son Roy is manager of the family farm corporation, says their business has thrived through good management, keeping the farm in

the family, and increasing the size of their operation. But attitude is also important.

"You have to consider the importance of the land and the stewardship of its resources, both agricultural and natural," says Warder. "It's important to treat land not as a commodity but as a community to which you belong."

*Lorraine Brown is a freelance writer living near Owen Sound, Ontario.*

*Below: Eastnor's low lying topography and clay soils made for poor farming. This drainage ditch was excavated with dynamite.*

*Photo: Benchmarks - A History of Eastnor Township and Lion's Head. Courtesy: Stan Brown Printers, Owen Sound.*



By Pam Heaven

# Alpine Escarpment

If you're hankering for spectacular scenery and the fast-paced thrills of downhill skiing, look no further than the Niagara Escarpment.

With a dozen ski resorts strung along this 725 kilometre limestone ridge, each winter more people are discovering Ontario's best alpine skiing is just a short drive away.

Reaching heights of 246 metres, the highest ski slopes in the province are found on this ancient geological formation.

They seem puny compared to the Rockies or Laurentians. Yet each winter just as many skiers hit Ontario hills as the mountains of Alberta and British Columbia combined.

It's a tradition that began with the Toronto Ski Club in the 1930's. Early members cut trails on the hills of Caledon and Collingwood. A decade later the Toronto Club boasted 7,000 Alpine skiers, making it the world's largest local ski club.

The 1940's brought another pioneer of Ontario's ski industry

to the escarpment. The late Jozo Weider left his native Czechoslovakia and settled his family in Collingwood to establish what is now the province's biggest ski resort, Blue Mountain.

Weider's mission to promote alpine skiing was tireless. By 1962 after years of struggle and near financial disasters, he made Collingwood "Ski Capital of Ontario."

*"Reaching heights of 246 metres, the highest ski slopes in the province are found on this ancient geological formation."*



*Top: Skiing Blue Mountain in Collingwood.  
Photo: Ministry of Culture, Tourism & Recreation  
Bottom: Snowmaking at Glen Eden in Milton  
Photo: D. Boucher, courtesy HRCA.*

Skiing has since become the fastest-growing tourism industry in the province.

Over the last decade, the number of alpine skiers in Ontario doubled. By 1990 there were 1.25 million downhill skiers and 46 percent of the province's population had tried the sport.

"We're probably the only sec-

tor of the tourism industry that has experienced any growth last year," says Don McIlveen, executive director of the Ontario Ski Resorts Association.

Skiing these days is big business. Since 1980, Ontario ski resorts have invested \$25 million a year in technology, upgrading resorts and aggressive marketing to maintain an edge.

Three secrets stand behind success - the escarpment, the six million people within a 100-kilometre radius and snow-making.

Conditions were primitive when Jozo Weider got his start. Early rope tows, nicknamed "hemp horrors" were slippery and skiers needed strong arms to hang



*Colin Travis, Planner at Blue Mountain Resort, Collingwood.*

*Photo: Willy Waterton*

*Below: Quad-chairlift at Blue Mountain in Collingwood. Photo: Willy Waterton*

on. At the mercy of Mother Nature, ski operators prayed for snow.



Today, chairlifts shuttle skiers up the hills, four at a time. Under the slopes, a complex network of pipes ensures snow coverage from November to April.

Blue Mountain has become an all-season resort with ski hills, a hotel and condominiums, a golf course and slide rides. As development proceeds an alpine village will grow at the escarpment's base. The owners are banking on turning Blue Mountain into a world class destination to equal Banff or Aspen, Colorado, according to planner Colin Travis.

Travis, a full-time planner at Blue Mountain makes sure development at the resort meets the environmental standards of regulatory bodies such as the Niagara Escarpment Commission(NEC).

*"Three secrets stand behind success - the escarpment, the six million people within a 100-kilometre radius and snow-making."*

Without this valuable natural resource, resorts would be out of business, operators say. And while they expand to compete, ski operators recognize they must protect the investment from the ground up.

"The first environmentalists along the escarpment were the skiers", said Ted Hynes, general manager of the Beaver Valley Ski Club.

To discourage erosion, ski resorts plant about 100,000 trees a year along the escarpment, he said. Drainage measures and grass seeding guard against "slumps" - earth cave-ins caused by water seeping through cracks in the limestone.

They work with the Niagara Escarpment Commission and other provincial and municipal authorities to carefully plan new runs, tows and buildings.

Talisman Mountain Resort found its market niche in the unique geology of the Beaver Valley, appealing to city folk looking for a get-away in the great outdoors.

"It's a big part of our success that there's so much to do here on the escarpment," said Todd Lewin, marketing director for Talisman.

Year round, resort guides lead guests on nature hikes to Old Baldy, the bluff that faces Talisman Mountain and nearby Eugenia Falls - both destinations on the Bruce Trail.

"The valley view from Old Baldy is breathtaking," Lewin said. "But as well as enjoying it, people want to know where it all came from."

Ski trail names reflect the glacial valley's history and geology.

A sign posted at Sinkhole run informs skiers that these circular depressions which filter water run-off into the rock layers are



*Above: Youths on T-bar at Glen Eden in Milton.*

*Photo: D. Boucher, courtesy, HRCA.*

*Below: Old Baldy, Kimberley.*

*Photo: NEC*

examples of Karst topography. Soon, the resort hopes to have another free-standing plaque describing Old Baldy.

All Talisman brochures note the escarpment's designation as a United Nations World Biosphere Reserve.

Construction of the first trails here in the early 1960's cleared huge swaths of trees and brush off the hills, Lewin said. Over the next few years, thousands of pine, cedar and white spruce, each about five feet tall, will be planted along the ridge as a windbreak and down the slopes to narrow the trails.

With the interest in the environment and a return to family activities, Talisman's environmental focus is paying off. Last year, visits were up 15 per cent.

*"The valley view from Old Baldy is breathtaking," Lewin said. "But as well as enjoying it, people want to know where it all came from."*

Lewin said the resort recognizes the need for the NEC regulations and works closely with the commission. "It's good because that way they will ensure it saves the valley," he said. "That's what people come to Talisman for."

At the Glen Eden Ski Area, near Milton, protecting the natural resource is the main priority of the owner and operator the Halton Region Conservation Authority.

More than 100,000 skiers from the Greater Toronto area come here each season, but Sandy Bell, conservation area manager, said the authority has resisted pres-



sure to expand.

Unlike other resorts, Glen Eden doesn't have to turn a profit. The ski hills, however, have made money which the authority puts towards other conservation projects.

Smaller is better also holds true for the many private clubs on the escarpment.

The Caledon Ski Club, near Toronto, capped its membership seven years ago.

Higher numbers would make it difficult for the club to maintain the well groomed hills and the uncrowded outdoor experience members demand, according to office manager Gayle Porter.

Canadian ski greats like World Cup Champions Todd Brooker, Liisa Savijarvi, Kellie Casey and Steve Podborski all trained on escarpment hills.

With Ontario's highest vertical drop and longest run (1,150 metres), the Georgian Peaks club near Collingwood has produced more national ski team talent than any

other club in North America.

"We are the closest thing to Western Canada in Ontario," said marketing coordinator Keri Wagner. "We have the same vertical incline as the mountains, we just don't have the length."

Collingwood NEC Commissioner Greta McGillivray has tested the pitch on Canada's best ski slopes, but her heart belongs to the Niagara Escarpment.

The daughter of Svend Jepson,

*"The Georgian Peaks club near Collingwood has produced more national ski team talent than any other club in North America."*

a Danish Olympic gymnast and founder of the original Caledon Ski Club, McGillivray claims she and her sisters were almost "born on skis."

McGillivray's passion for the sport and the escarpment began when she was a child skiing four kilometres down the Caledon hills to get to school.

As a young woman, she worked her summers at Lake Louise, Alberta to earn money to ski with the Canadian ski team each winter.

"I figure I was the original ski bum in Ontario," she joked.

A long-time member of Osler Bluffs ski club, McGillivray is a familiar face in the ski community around Collingwood. Even before joining the commission two years ago, she was committed to protecting the escarpment for its natural environment and for the sake of the sport she loves. ■

*Skiers at the top of Blue Mountain, Collingwood. Georgian Bay in the background*

*Photo: Willy Waterton*

*Pam Heaven is a writer for The Sun Times in Owen Sound.*



NORTH

"There are bones down there."

## The prehistoric secrets of Elba Cave

In the spring of 1990, I got a note from Greg Warchol of the Toronto Caving Group. Greg had been crawling around a cave in Mono Cliffs Provincial Park and had come back with some intriguing photographs.

I had explored Mono Cliffs for many years and know its cliffs and crevices very well. I was surprised and excited to hear about a major "new" cave.

It was first noted in 1987 by Gord Duncan from the Toronto Caving Group. He named it Elba Cave, after the defunct hamlet which exists only as a geographical reference on a topographic map of Mono Township.

"Elba Cave is in good shape," Greg wrote. "There are no signs of vandalism and minimal signs of traffic through the cave." Attached were photographs of a cave floor

covered in bones. The letter ended with an irresistible invitation to come and see for myself.

I persuaded Dr. Howard Savage and David Mason of the University of Toronto's Faunal Archaeo-Osteology Lab to join the party. A crew from the Toronto Caving Group generously offered to lower us into the cave, baby-sit us while we were down there and, hopefully, pull us out again.

For me caves like this are the stuff of nightmares. At ground level, Elba Cave is a plain, small hole about one metre wide. But it's a 10 metre drop to the nearest foothold. No wonder it was filled with bones; it was a natural trap for unwary animals, a refuge for others.

Inside, it's everything you imagine a cave to be — dark, damp, cold, constricting. Not a

By John Riley



Photo: Greg Warchol

good place to work out your anxieties. Formations of raspy "popcorn coral" remind you how close the walls are as you worm your body feet first into the black abyss. And what would a cave be without bats; Elba is home to several hundred.

Dr. Savage's regular universe is a sunny U of T lab, bone specimens in shoe boxes stacked to the ceiling, strings of vertebrae hanging from a peg, a massive elephant skull parked on a work table. Doc says he has "bone fever" and this lab is a good place for him to recover from (or enjoy) his condition.

Descending 25 metres in the sputtering light of a headlamp was not something he relished. But the fever burns deep. "There are bones down there," he said.

Our mission was to collect as many bones as we could from the surface of the cave floor before they were trampled and destroyed by cave vandals. After three and a half hours, the team escaped unhurt with three large baggies filled with bones.

Within three months, Doc had worked over the bones, sorting many species of mammals and a few frogs, toads and birds. He identified mammals as large as the White-tailed deer.

The most interesting bones were from a marten (*Martes americana*), a mammal similar to a ferret. It has not existed in Dufferin County for 150 years.

This find suggested that the bones, despite their perfect state of preservation, might be much older than we first thought.

Clearly another visit was in order. Prof. Jock McAndrews from the botany department of the Royal Ontario Museum was invited to join the team. A rough map was

concocted, a coresample was taken from the cave floor for pollen analysis. We bagged a few more bones.

By September, a pollen story was emerging. At the bottom of the sample, Dr. McAndrews found pollen from Jack Pine and a few Balsam Fir. This would have been

*"Our mission was to collect as many bones as we could from the surface of the cave floor before they were trampled and destroyed by cave vandals."*

the vegetation of the area 9,000 to 10,500 years ago, when the land was emerging from the ice and water of the last ice age.

We had to ask ourselves, could some of the bones be that old too?

Back in the lab, the bones got more interesting. Dr. Savage began examining all 625 bones from vertebrate species. The marten bones, retrieved on the first visit into the cave were radiocarbon-dated. They were 510 years old.

Bones collected from the second visit suddenly held a more fascinating story — a discovery of great ecological significance. Doc identified a distal half of the right femur bone of an adult pika (*Ochotona princeps*), a mammal about the size of a small rabbit.

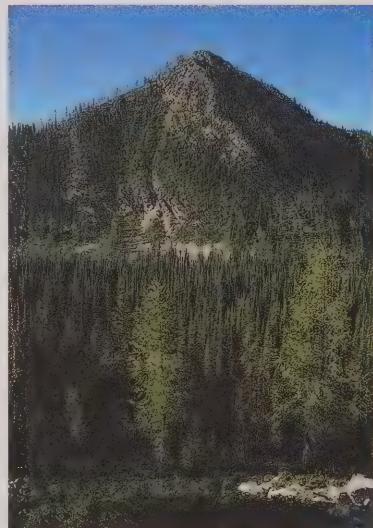
Pika presently inhabit the high-elevation talus slopes of the western cordillera (including the Rocky Mountains) in Alberta, British Columbia and the Yukon.

Dr. Savage used the latest isotrace dating technique to reveal that the pika bone was 8,670 years old (give or take 220 years).

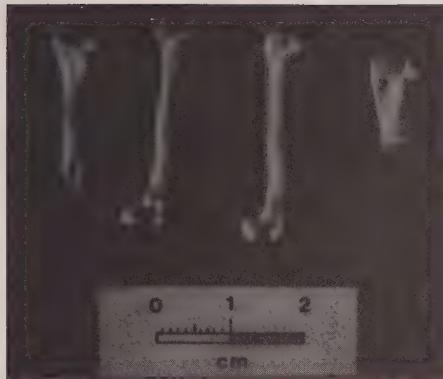
Many questions filled my mind. What was the ecology of the park like when pika were thriving here? Was it like the open subarctic vegetation of the scree slopes of the Rockies?

Records show that pika bones were found once before along the escarpment. Dr. C.S. Churcher and R.R. Dods discovered a bag of bones in the basement of the Royal Ontario Museum in the late 1970's.

They had been sitting in a corner since the 1950's, sent in by a worker in a limestone quarry near Rattlesnake Point, Milton. He found them in a crevice when the quarry was expanded. The size of these and the Elba Cave pika bones suggested that the eastern species of pika may have been larger, an



*Above: Top of Grey Creek Pass, Purcell Mountains, British Columbia.  
Photo: John Riley*



Pika bones. The two half femur bones on the extreme right and left are those of the pika found in Elba Cave; the two full size bones in the middle are from Kelso Cave.

Photo: Dr. Howard Savage

entirely different, extinct species.

Both finds were essentially accidents. Much of the best work in the natural sciences revolves around this kind of serendipity. Under the guidance of Dr. McAndrews, the next step was a full coring of the McCarston's Lake. It's a small kettle lake located within the park and the only natural lake in Mono Township.

Coring takes place through the winter ice, so you can get over the deepest part of the lake. The hard surface of the ice gives good purchase. We pulled a 730 cm (24 ft) core, 5 cm in diameter, from the lake bottom. It yielded a radio-carbon date of about 9,000 years before present.

We couldn't get to the very bottom deposits of the lake because we hit dense "fen peat". When we get through, we expect to find the postglacial vegetation that occurred immediately after the last glacier retreated from the area, when pika roamed the talus.

It puzzles me why there was peat buried so far under the lake deposits. How and when was this former vegetation overtaken by a lake? Did precipitation increase at

some point? Did the drainage pattern change?

Research in the natural sciences always leaves unanswered questions, inviting further research. Mono Cliffs

*"The Elba Cave pika bones suggested that the eastern species of pika may have been larger, an entirely different, extinct species."*

Provincial Park will continue to be a very important research area, a place to observe and raise new questions.

Researchers know the park. University of Guelph professor Doug Larson has set up one of his study sites for old-growth Eastern White Cedar forests on the cliffs' rim. Dr. Don Britton, also from Guelph, has studied the many ferns in the park. Mono Cliffs has 46 species, making it one of the richest fern areas in Ontario.



Pika *Ochotona (princeps)* Purcell Mountains, B.C.

Photo: John Riley

"We've barely scratched the surface of what we could learn here about the natural history of the Escarpment," says Kathy Lindsay, a biologist and author of a 1991 biological inventory Mono Cliffs. "The research potential here is tremendous." ☀



Above: Pulling a core at McCarston's Lake, Mono Cliffs P.P. Photo: John Riley

John Riley is a Terrestrial Planning Ecologist with Ontario's Ministry of Natural Resources.

# Rockside

The day was bright and warm — Queen's weather they called it — on August 4, 1964. A small party gathered on the farm of Alex McLaren, Con. 4, Lot 5, Caledon Township, to witness the laying of the cornerstone for his new home.

Christened 'Rockside Castle' after the surrounding area on Caledon Mountain, the house was sited on a ridge where it commanded a splendid view over rolling fields to the south. Plans for the building were provided by the architect William Kauffmann of Toronto; Messrs. Smith & Perry of Brampton undertook to do the masonry; and John Muir of Caledon contracted for the carpentry and joiner's work. The cost was estimated at \$6000.

As Rockside emerged from behind the contractors' scaffolding, people gawked in wonder at its picturesque Gothic appearance, particularly at the battlemented turret on a salient angle and round stair-tower adjacent to the main entrance. Said to be modelled on a Scottish castle McLaren had once seen, the building had a toy-like quality in spite of being on a massive scale.

Its walls were huge blocks of rock-faced limestone quarried from the escarpment nearby. All eighteen rooms, which included nine bedrooms, a sitting room, library, dining room, kitchen,



# Castle

By Stephen A. Otto



scullery, butler's pantry and servants' dining room, had twelve-foot ceilings.

According to *The Canada Farmer* in 1865 a comfortable two-storey farm house with a dozen rooms could be built in stone for \$3000. As Rockside cost twice that, it begged the question of how McLaren made his fortune since pretty clearly he did not get rich from farming and he had no profession or well known business interests throwing off large profits. Perhaps the answer lay in a timely windfall, bequest or fortunate marriage.

Also open to conjecture is how he chose his architect. William Kauffmann was born and trained in Germany. After emigrating in the early 1850s to Rochester, N.Y., he relocated in 1856 to Toronto where his commissions included the Rossin House hotel and new quarters for the Royal Insurance Co., the Bank of Toronto and *The Globe* Newspaper. He was not active in Peel County before 1863 when James Brown, a client in the city, hired him to do a pair of houses in Brampton. In all likelihood this led to the Rockside

*Despite its massive scale, Rockside Castle had a toy-like quality. McLaren modelled his Gothic oddity on a Scottish castle he'd seen. The photo was taken around 1950.*

*Photo: Courtesy Ontario Archives, S-18249, Russell K. Cooper Collection 92.0068.M.*



Peel County's court house and jail in Brampton was designed by Rockside Castle's architect, William Kauffmann. Photo: Region of Peel Archives, M81.0583

commission the following year and to Kauffmann's getting the nod to design the Peel County court house and jail in Brampton in 1865.

The Castle was home to two generations of McLarens. For forty years from 1876 to 1916 a post office designated as Grange, Ontario, was located in a small room on the ground floor. Its name reflected McLaren's great interest in the Grange movement (formally the National Grange of the Patrons of Husbandry),

founded in the U.S. in 1867 and in Canada a few years later.

In 1937 the property was sold to a lumbering company which turned the house into accommodations for its cutters while they cleared the land of its hardwoods.

Sold again in 1944 the building sat empty for most of the decade until 1953 when it was bought by James and Margaret Ross of Toronto. They restored some of its elegance and put in new wiring

and heating only to lose their home to fire in 1963. Nothing was left standing but the walls.

Because a full restoration was now prohibitively expensive, new owners in the latter 1980s created a modern residence within the walls after taking them down to a uniform two storeys. ■

*Stephen A. Otto is a Consulting Historian in Toronto.*

# Rock Slides !

Ontario's Niagara Escarpment is a geological time capsule. It is a record of changes spanning 450 million years.

It is a story of cold burial under two kilometres of ice. A tale of clear tropical seas teeming with coral reefs and strange creatures. Of an immense river delta like the mouth of the Ganges River. Of an ancient mountain range, now long gone.

In 1992, the Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC) published the Guide to the Geology of the Niagara Escarpment. The book included 10 field trips to make it easier for teachers, their students and

anyone else to experience the escarpment first hand.

The NEC decided to build on the success of the guide by offering slides to accompany the field trips. Some of them are shown here.

The slides come with notes describing geological features on the ground and from the air. Each set is also available as a 10- to 15-minute narrated video.



For a complete description and price list write:

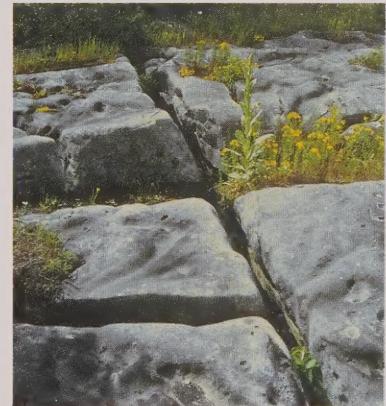
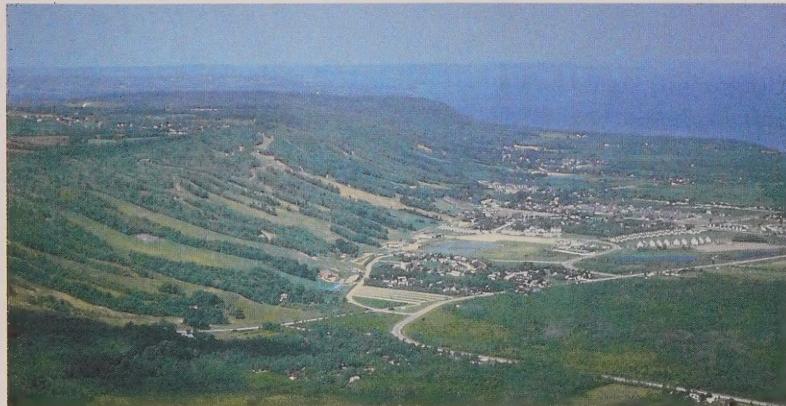
John Koegler, Geovisuals, Box 869,  
Waterloo, Ontario,  
N2J 4C3, or phone (519) 884-2673.

**Top left:** Kettle Lake in Singhampton Moraine, Caledon, Region of Peel

**Bottom left:** Edge of Niagara Escarpment at the Blue Mountains in Collingwood, Grey County

**Top right:** Lower Balls Fall's, Region of Niagara

**Bottom right:** Bedrock karst on the Bruce Peninsula, Bruce County. **Photos:** John Koegler





## Ontario's Niagara Escarpment - A World Biosphere Reserve



Ontario's Niagara Escarpment stretches 725 km from Queenston, near Niagara Falls, to Tobermory, at the tip of the Bruce Peninsula. It was formed 450 million years ago along the shore of a shallow tropical sea that covered a vast area of Ontario and Michigan. Skeletons of primitive sea creatures and debris from ancient mountains were compressed into massive layers of reef and sedimentary rock. Over succeeding millions of years, erosion from glaciers, ancient rivers and lakes, and the elements sculpted the rock layers into their present form.

The Niagara Escarpment and lands in its vicinity—183,000 hectares in eight counties and regions and 37 local municipalities—are regulated by the Niagara Escarpment Plan. Adopted by Ontario in 1985, it is Canada's first large-scale environmental land-use plan. The plan ensures that the Escarpment will be maintained substantially as a continuous natural environment. It strikes a balance between conservation, protection and environmentally compatible development.

The United Nations named Ontario's Niagara Escarpment a World Biosphere Reserve in 1990. This makes the Escarpment part of a network of protected samples of the world's major ecosystem types devoted to conservation of nature and scientific research in the service of humanity. Reserves provide a standard against which the effects of human impact on the environment can be measured. There are only six reserves in all of Canada.